



Perennial Pepperweed



flowers



leaves



seeds

Perennial Pepperweed

Genus: *Lepidium*

Species: *latifolium*

Priority Listing: 2A

Perennial

Perennial pepperweed is native to southern Europe, Asia, and the Mediterranean region; it was likely introduced into North America from eastern Europe as a contaminant in imported sugar beet seed.

This plant usually grows 1 to 3' in height and has deep spreading roots that can grow as deep as 6'. Perennial pepperweed **inhabits** flood plains, irrigation structures, pastures, wetlands, **riparian** areas, roadsides, and residential sites.

Stems and leaves are bright green to gray green in color. Leaves are broad at the base, taper to a point and have a white mid-vein that runs the length of the leaf. The **basal** leaves of this plant can grow up to 13" long and 4" wide on long stalks covered with a waxy coating. Stem leaves are alternate and smaller in size than **rosette** leaves, with shorter stalks that do not clasp the stem.

Perennial pepperweed flowers are small, form dense rounded clusters on top of the branches, and bloom from early summer into fall. Flowers are less than 1/8" wide and have four white petals.

Perennial pepperweed fruits are small flattened pods, reddish brown in color, about 1/10" long; and with 2 chambers; each chamber produces one seed. Seeds remain on the plant and fall off gradually. This plant has a thick woody stem that can break off at the base and if propelled by the wind, can roll long distances; spreading seeds.

Perennial pepperweed is **toxic** to livestock if eaten. Dense infestations of this plant can prohibit the growth and development of essential riparian trees such as willows and cottonwoods that are important to wildlife.



Photo courtesy of Leslie J. Mehrhoff, Bugwood.org

Basal: leaves situated at the base of a plant, may look different than the plant's other leaves

Inhabits: to live in, reside in, or be present in

Perennial: a plant whose life spans several years

Riparian: relating to wetlands or lands along streams, rivers, or bodies of water

Rosettes: circular clusters of leaves that radiate from a center of a plant, close to the ground, like the dandelion

Toxic: poisonous quality based upon poisonous substances at the cellular level of organisms